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Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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97-82730 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*) (A/52/92, A/52/112, A/52/139, A/52/153-S/1997/384, A/52/163, A/52/217-S/1997/507, A/52/284, A/52/318, A/52/432, A/52/447-S/1997/775, A/52/460, A/52/514-S/1997/815)

(f) First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/52/413, A/52/573, E/CN.5/1997/8 (Part II))

1. **Mr. Langmore** (Director, Social Policy and Development Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) and recommendations for the rest of the Decade (A/52/573), said that the report discussed national and global strategies for poverty eradication and actions of the United Nations system in support of the global campaign for the eradication of poverty launched at the World Summit for Social Development.

2. Experience had shown that national strategies for poverty reduction could be considered in five parts (para. 19): time-bound national poverty reduction goals (paras. 20 and 21); sustained strong rates of economic and employment growth (paras. 23-26); framework of public policy (para. 28); increasing opportunities for the poor (paras. 30-33); and strengthened international cooperation (paras. 38, 39 and 43-46). It was encouraging to note that one major donor of official development assistance (ODA), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, had announced the preceding week that it planned to do its part to reverse the decline in such aid flows. He also drew attention to the United Nations system-wide initiatives put in place to ensure a coordinated follow-up to the recent global conferences (paras. 47-49, 52, 56 and 57).

3. In conclusion, he said that every individual had the capacity to contribute to the global campaign to eradicate poverty (para. 61).

4. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed regret that the Committee had been forced to delay its work for at least one week because document A/52/573 had not been available on time.

5. In order to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the developing countries, Governments and the international community must work together to eradicate poverty. A significant increase in public and private expenditure on infrastructure and the social sectors was required. The eradication of poverty depended on the full integration of the poor into economic, social and political life, and he underscored the importance of the empowerment of women in that regard. Official development assistance (ODA) continued to be crucial, in particular in low-income countries. Given the serious debt burden faced by developing countries, the Group of 77 and China agreed with the Secretary-General that a further major initiative on debt relief was required to lead to a lasting solution.

6. Sluggish world demand for and declining prices of commodities had contributed to the poor economic performance of many developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries. In addition to correcting imperfections in commodity markets, the international community must commit itself to providing additional resources to support commodity diversification programmes in Africa and elsewhere. Tariff and non-tariff barriers should be removed in order to improve the access of commodities from developing countries to the markets of the developed countries.

7. He welcomed the steps taken to ensure coordinated follow-up to recent major global conferences. Such initiatives should not be confined to United Nations agencies and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The Economic and Social Council should take the lead in ensuring that poverty eradication activities were carried out in a coordinated and timely manner.

8. **Mr. Schumacher** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and, in addition, Norway, expressed regret at the late publication of document A/52/573.

9. The European Union fully endorsed the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development and agreed that particular attention must be paid to the situation of women living in poverty. Recognizing that the eradication of poverty must be dealt with from both a social and economic perspective, the European Union supported closer cooperation between experts from the Second and Third Committees.

10. While it was true that each Government had the primary responsibility for eradicating poverty among its own people and for devising national strategies in cooperation with all sectors of civil society, ODA continued to be a major source of financing for the developing countries, in particular the least developed among them. The European Union welcomed the fact that the issue of poverty

eradication had become an integral part of the sustainable development strategies of multilateral organizations. The international community should continue to mobilize ODA from new as well as existing funding mechanisms. It was also of the utmost importance to create an environment conducive to foreign investment and social structures which responded to the needs of all sectors of society. Recipient countries should reduce their military expenditures and redistribute the resources thus released in favour of the poorest members of the population, as envisaged in the 20/20 initiative discussed at the World Summit for Social Development.

11. **Ms. Hall** (United States of America), referring to the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/573), said that her delegation agreed that universal public education, the gender gap and basic health and nutrition were vital issues in poverty eradication. National reporting on poverty eradication must contain frank assessments and establish targets and specific action plans.

12. While acknowledging the continuing need for ODA, such assistance, like foreign direct investment, would be ineffective without a proper policy environment. Her delegation believed that primary responsibility for poverty eradication rested with Governments; the report of the Secretary-General tended to overemphasize the role of international efforts in that regard. Governments must, *inter alia*, foster an environment of entrepreneurship favourable to the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises and assist them in gaining access to capital markets. They must ensure strong rates of economic and employment growth opportunities for personal and community development and better governance. They must also make every effort to end official corruption and civil strife.

13. Experience had shown that poverty eradication was possible in developing countries that deemed it a priority, maintained sound growth-oriented policies, channelled all development resources, including ODA, into programmes for the poor and set up carefully targeted social safety nets to cushion the short-term impact of economic adjustment. Carefully managed debt was another valuable development tool. The Secretary-General's report placed too much emphasis on the need for additional debt forgiveness, which might discourage creditors from granting new loans to developing countries. Nonetheless, her delegation fully supported the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

14. Her delegation strongly disagreed with the statement in the report concerning the lack of equitable balance in the application of trade liberalization (A/52/573, para. 46). Uneven implementation of trade liberalization by Governments and the lack of progress in certain sectors, such as agriculture, should be addressed in other forums. The benefits of globalization and economic liberalization were clear: in a recent study, the World Bank had found that growth was twice as fast in developing countries that integrated rapidly as in those that integrated more slowly. Moreover, the annual growth rate of the developing countries as a whole was 5 per cent, whereas the average annual growth rate of the developed economies was 2 per cent. The assertion in the report that the volatility of capital flows threatened the development of developing countries was an exaggeration. In fact, the competent international financial institutions had responded appropriately to recent market volatility.

15. A high rate of economic growth and job creation were crucial to poverty eradication, particularly in countries with rapid population growth. To that end, Governments must promote the creation of a dynamic private sector and a skilled, flexible labour force. Other vital factors included sound economic policies, the rule of law, good governance, investment in human capital, open and competitive markets social justice and environmental protection. It was important to ensure that all sectors of society, including women, youth, the elderly and the disabled, had access to employment and other economic opportunities.

16. Recent poverty eradication initiatives in the United States had included an increase in the minimum wage, expanded tax credits for working families, a reduction in the federal deficit and improvements in education and teaching.

17. **Mr. Pérez-Otermin** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), namely, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and his own country, as well as the associated countries of Bolivia and Chile, said that Governments must attach priority to the eradication of poverty in their policies and programmes on an ongoing basis. He cited statistics which illustrated alarmingly high levels of hunger, chronic malnutrition and poverty in the world, and emphasized that the international community must do far more than it had thus far to live up to the commitments made at recent international conferences with a view to combating malnutrition, reducing infant mortality and eradicating poverty.

18. The eradication of poverty should be the major focus of the international community into the next century and was indeed an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of mankind. Economic reforms introduced during the 1990s in the MERCOSUR countries had led to greater

macroeconomic stability, had spurred renewed growth and regional integration and had promoted their integration into the global economy as well. Emphasis had been placed on fostering the liberalization of their economies, reducing inflation, allocating resources to social investment and ensuring full democratic participation in the reform process.

19. The MERCOSUR countries recognized that they must do more to foster sustained economic growth and would focus on attracting investment, ensuring macroeconomic stability, encouraging competitiveness in the global market and meeting the basic needs of their populations, *inter alia* through investments in human resources. They also welcomed the microcredit initiative, which had already yielded positive results.

20. **Mr. Wang Qun** (China) said that China, as the world's largest low-income country, was deeply aware of its responsibility in the field of poverty eradication. Since the early 1980s, the Government had mobilized all the forces of society in an organized and large-scale drive to eliminate poverty. As a result, the number of people in poverty had dropped from 250 million in the late 1970s to 5.8 million, and the goal was to eliminate absolute poverty by the end of the century.

21. Based on its experience of the past two decades, China had learned that the eradication of poverty required greater public awareness in order to mobilize all the forces of society. It was not only a government mandate, but a shared responsibility of society as a whole. Moreover, efforts to eliminate poverty should be aimed at its root causes as well as its symptoms. Relief alone could not provide a permanent solution. The way out of poverty lay in achieving development. The eradication of poverty also required an integrated and comprehensive approach to the numerous economic, historical and geographic factors, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. Fast-growing regions should also be encouraged to support those lagging behind. For example, the areas along the eastern coast of China had provided support to the western region through funding, technology, human resources and capacity-building, thus closing the development gap between the regions.

22. It was true that developing countries should rely mainly on their own efforts to eliminate poverty, and many had already worked tirelessly in that direction. However, poverty in developing countries was largely the result of historical factors and an unfavourable external economic environment. Currently, there was consensus on poverty eradication through international development cooperation; what was lacking, however, was determination, political will and action on the part of the international community to implement that consensus. At the beginning of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, China appealed to the international community to implement in earnest the international consensus, especially in the core areas of funding, debt, trade and technology, thus securing a better future for mankind.

23. **Mr. Azaiez** (Tunisia) said that poverty eradication had been the priority objective of all the major United Nations conferences held since 1990. Those conferences had highlighted not only the measures that must be taken to eliminate poverty, but also the enormity of the challenge to the global community. It was encouraging to note that a spirit of complementarity and cooperation appeared to be growing stronger among all the United Nations agencies including the Bretton Woods institutions. By harmonizing work programmes on poverty eradication, the necessary policy coherence in the field and the integration of all areas of intervention could be achieved.

24. At the country level, the national strategy for the eradication of poverty in Tunisia focused on the fulfilment of a schedule for poverty eradication, economic growth and employment, involvement of civil society, more equal distribution of wealth and the development of basic social infrastructure, including education, health, housing, electrification, roads and communications.

25. From the work of the technical bodies of the Economic and Social Council over the past five years, a consensus had emerged on the need to implement the commitments on poverty eradication made at the major international conferences and on the establishment of an enabling environment for sustainable development through market access, better terms of trade, debt relief and increased flow of technology and resources to the South. The involvement of civil society and non-governmental organizations would focus on the advancement of women and human rights by ensuring access for all to basic services, jobs and the means of production. Tunisia, in an attempt to reach isolated rural areas, had established a National Solidarity Fund to finance projects in areas without a minimum basic infrastructure. Its impact had been so great that it was expanding its operations by offering credit to borrowers who would not qualify for loans under the traditional banking system.

26. Although the international community had made poverty eradication its priority, the decline in ODA continued, reaching the lowest levels since the 1970s. That decline in resources could only spell failure for poverty eradication efforts. The experience of many countries over the past two decades had clearly shown that far more was involved in social progress than simple market forces. The

goals of ensuring social protection for individuals and their integration into society would not be reached without political will at both the national and international levels.

27. **Ms. Hammam** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that in 1996, the World Food Programme had reached more than 45 million people living in hunger and poverty. While it took pride in the numbers of people it reached, it also acknowledged that the poor and hungry themselves were the most resourceful and inventive in finding solutions to poverty and hunger.

28. As a front-line agency in the battle against hunger, WFP responded to humanitarian crises created by war, drought, floods or crop failure. Even in emergencies, however, it sought to lay the foundation for permanent food security and self-reliance through community-based food-for-work projects to rehabilitate damaged infrastructure.

29. It had become quite clear over the years that hunger was not just a symptom of poverty, but a cause. The hungry poor simply could not produce and compete with the well-nourished. It had also become clear that hunger affected women and children far more often than grown men. Seven out of ten of the world's poor were women earning less than US$ 1 a day. The words "poverty" and "women" had become synonymous in nearly every quarter of the globe. When WFP targeted its resources on women, it was by definition focusing on the poorest of the poor. Successful development projects directly aimed at women did not succeed just for women but for the community as a whole. The amount of food that actually reached needy families was greater if women were involved in assessing food aid needs and distribution. In an emergency situation, households might be the only remnant of the social structure. A household with a mother involved in her community, both socially and economically, was far more likely to withstand the strain of physical uprooting or sudden loss of normal food supply channels. By giving food directly to women, WFP supported their traditional family role and helped strengthen their family's options for the future. To support female education, WFP required half the beneficiaries of all school feeding projects to be girls.

30. In 1996, 73 per cent of WFP funds went to humanitarian relief operations, while a decade earlier, the ratio was reversed: about 70 per cent went for development projects and only 30 per cent for relief operations. Part of the cost of meeting emergency needs had been a decrease in support to those who lived in silent crisis in the city slums of the developing world and in remote rural villages. Cutting back on development activities in some areas of the world meant that people in those regions were becoming more vulnerable and less able to survive emergencies, whether man-made or natural. By continuing to divert funds from development assistance, there was a risk of losing much of the ground gained in the battle to help hungry people. The number of hungry people had been on the decline and that decline was projected to continue; however, a slowdown or even a reversal of that positive trend remained a real possibility with the current sharp contraction in ODA.

31. The renewed commitment of the United Nations to increasing resources for development reaffirmed the critical role it could and should play in development. Furthermore, the United Nations Development Group would help to promote more collaborative programming and use of resources in the quest to eradicate poverty.

32. **Mr. Gutta** (Ethiopia) said that the people of sub-Saharan Africa remained among the poorest in the world, with a high incidence of absolute poverty and income distribution characterized by large gender differences. Eradicating poverty in the world as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative called for a coordinated approach and effort at all levels.

33. The World Summit for Social Development had affirmed that the primary responsibility for combating poverty lay with national Governments; however, the United Nations and other development partners must strive to encourage and strengthen subregional and international efforts. Eradication of poverty required a more effective international environment and the full support of wealthy nations.

34. Ethiopia had launched a comprehensive development strategy and was implementing policies aimed at unleashing the enormous energy, creativity and economic potential of the poor. It was making the transition to a market economy and had made a great deal of progress towards democratization and good governance. Over the past six years, because of that strategy, the country had been able to rehabilitate its production and basic services infrastructure. The prevailing peace and stability as well as the economic and social reforms had established a favourable environment for effective use of resources to achieve the ultimate goal of social and economic prosperity.

35. National efforts to eradicate poverty, especially in the least developed countries, also required the full support of the international community. His delegation renewed the call for mobilization of new and additional resources.

36. **Ms. Alou** (Niger) said that her Government, with the support of its development partners, had made working towards sustainable human development and combating

poverty a central goal. Reversing the trends towards widespread poverty and food insecurity among the rural and urban populations was one of her Government's highest priorities. In that connection, in 1995 an interministerial working group had established, with the cooperation of the private sector, a national framework programme to combat poverty. The strategies proposed by the programme highlighted economic growth as a priority for the development of the rural sector and gave pride of place to agricultural activities. The implementation of that framework programme required the effective participation of the population, either in the form of a dialogue on priorities or in the form of direct access to some of the available resources.

37. Since over a quarter of humankind was affected by poverty, the international community should give top priority to poverty eradication. At recent international conferences, developing countries had reiterated the need to address the debt problem, the decline in ODA, the lack of investment and the allocation of fresh financial resources. All those factors highlighted the poverty raging in developing countries. The least developed countries should receive special treatment in the areas of external debt cancellation, increase in ODA and foreign direct investment. In that regard, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative was welcome, and the urgency of the situation required its immediate and unconditional implementation.

38. Specific efforts in the areas of transfer of technology, establishment of infrastructure and human resources development could strengthen the efforts of countries attempting to combat poverty. The international community must focus its action on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. All countries and organizations must make efforts to help integrate developing countries into the world economy.

39. **Mr. Rasheed** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that about half of the world's poor were children. Eradicating poverty was therefore central to the fulfilment of his organization's mandate. The fight against poverty was technically doable, financially feasible and morally imperative. Children must occupy centre stage in development because it was the investment in their well-being today that would be the guarantor of sustainable and equitable human development of future generations.

40. UNICEF believed that poverty had to be fought on many fronts simultaneously. It was convinced that the delivery of basic social services was one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways of combating some of the worst manifestations of poverty. UNICEF also influenced policies in favour of children and mobilized resources through the conversion of developing country debt into resources for children. Thus, debt with a face value of nearly $200 million had been converted into about $50 million worth of investments in social development programmes in 10 countries. UNICEF also ensured that adequate attention was paid to gender disparities in the pursuit of social development.

41. Progress since the World Summit for Children in 1990 had been uneven. On the positive side, over 80 per cent of children were now covered by immunization services, and an estimated 12 million infants each year were protected from brain damage caused by iodine deficiency; there was also a marked decline in severe forms of vitamin A deficiency. However, nearly 12 million children under the age of five still died every year, mostly from preventable causes. Furthermore, the goal of universal access to basic education was unlikely to be met; no significant progress had been made towards the goal of reducing maternal mortality by half by the year 2000; and it was virtually impossible to achieve the goal of universal access to sanitation by the year 2000.

42. If all members of the Development Assistance Committee were to meet the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of their GDP to ODA, $100 billion would be available annually, which would be sufficient to address the worst manifestations of poverty, especially child poverty. The debt overhang severely hampered the efforts of the poorest countries to reduce poverty. Even those that were eligible under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative had yet to receive any relief, and there was a fear that such relief might be too little, too late. Child poverty could also be reduced, through affirmative policies to include the poor into the global economy, the 20/20 initiative, which could generate sufficient resources to eliminate extreme poverty from the face of the earth over the next decade, and international support to help developing countries attract the private sector financing and investment that were vital for a concerted attack on poverty.

43. **Ms. Djatmiko** (Indonesia) said that the eradication of poverty was an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind. While she welcomed the great strides made in formulating strategies to eradicate absolute poverty and reduce overall poverty, she was concerned that poverty indicators continued to worsen while the gap between the rich and the poor widened. Furthermore, the share of ODA allocated to sustainable development and poverty eradication was too low.

44. A multidimensional approach needed to be taken; such an approach should integrate the poor into development programmes. It was only by enhancing such opportunities for the poor and for everyone that poverty could be eradicated once and for all. Indeed, it would be misleading to expect social progress to take place without sustained and accelerated economic growth. It was therefore critical that an increased focus should be directed towards priority areas and new and innovative sources of funding such as the 20/20 initiative. A further major debt relief initiative was also required in addition to strengthening the access of developing countries to markets and transferring more technology to such countries.

45. Her Government owed the success of its poverty reduction strategy to a broad array of policies which had emphasized, *inter alia*, agricultural and rural development, human resources development, job creation and access to productive assets for all. Furthermore, it had also devised a people-centred, participatory approach for the poorest of the poor, which had made a significant contribution to combating poverty.

46. Referring to paragraph 58 of the Secretary-General's report (A/52/573), she noted that "Poverty eradication, lessons from industrial countries" would be inappropriate as a theme for 1999 in the context of the General Assembly deliberations on the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. Since the majority of the poor lived in developing countries, the lessons from their experiences in poverty eradication should be taken fully into account.

47. **Ms. Hye Ran Yoo** (Republic of Korea) said that the theme of poverty eradication had permeated a number of major United Nations conferences, including the World Summit for Social Development and, more recently, the special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21. Her delegation agreed with the statement, in the report of the Secretary-General that time-bound national poverty reduction goals should be set at the national level in order to ensure a strong focus for policy development (A/52/573, para. 20). While economic growth was a prerequisite for poverty eradication, policy action was necessary in order to ensure that the poor shared in the benefits of growth.

48. Poverty was a multifaceted problem, defined not only by low income but also by the deprivation of basic human needs, such as nutrition, health, water, education and the exercise of human and political rights. Poverty reduction efforts must therefore include an increased allocation of resources to social development; in that connection, her delegation supported the goals of the 20/20 initiative. As an alarming proportion of the world's poor were women, it was also vital to incorporate a gender perspective.

49. The access of the poor to productive resources, such as land, credit, technology and, in particular, micro-credit, must be increased. In that connection, the Republic of Korea would host an expert group meeting on Microcredit for Enterprise Development in Africa in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL) in 1998. In conclusion, the United Nations would have a vital role to play in mobilizing international support for the poverty eradication efforts of national Governments.

50. **Mr. Yoshino** (Japan) said that his delegation supported the series of activities being carried out by the United Nations in the context of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and also supported the idea of establishing, at the initiative of national Governments, national poverty eradication strategies in each developing country with the support of the international community. In that regard, it was particularly important to stress the need for time-bound national poverty reduction goals, which were significant elements in the international community's efforts to implement the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Focused efforts by developing countries to attain clear and visible output-oriented targets would do much to secure the support of the donor community.

51. Sound macroeconomic management and solid infrastructure, as well as human and institutional capacity-building, were essential to establishing a favourable environment for the eradication of poverty. In order to achieve sustainable development, it was also important to ensure the efficient allocation of resources within the economy and effective government intervention to internalize social costs and social benefits without creating unsustainable market distortions. The eradication of poverty called for a multifaceted approach. Accordingly, while his delegation would welcome a decision to focus on a specific theme in each year of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, such themes should be closely interrelated and poverty eradication should be tackled in an integrated manner.

52. United Nations funds and programmes should also support the efforts of developing countries by strengthening coordination and avoiding duplication, and making full and efficient use of the limited resources available. Within the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the funds and programmes should further elaborate common indicators and monitor and evaluate their activities accordingly.

Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, which should begin at the earliest stage of development, also needed to be further encouraged. Education, particularly basic education, was crucial to capacity-building — the single most important feature of any effort to eradicate poverty and promote development cooperation.

53. While his delegation recognized the constraints faced by the Secretariat in preparing the Secretary-General's report (A/52/573), it regretted that the report's analysis was unbalanced. It was important to analyse not only the volume of cooperation but also its quality. An analysis of the real side of the economy — trade and investment and direct non-portfolio investment — which related more directly to the creation of economic opportunities for people in poverty, would have been useful. His delegation welcomed the *Human Development Report 1997*, which was entirely devoted to the eradication of poverty.

54. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said his delegation supported the statement delivered by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Poverty eradication required an enabling and responsive environment in order to empower the world's poor, two thirds of whom were women, particularly in the African and the least developed countries. The cross-sectoral nature of poverty eradication — which spanned, *inter alia*, primary health care, family planning programmes, universal access to basic education and adult literacy — meant that progress in one sector tended to trigger parallel advances in the other. Successful poverty alleviation projects in Bangladesh had enabled its poor to join the mainstream of society and become self-sustaining over time.

55. At the Microcredit Summit, held in Washington, D.C., in February 1997, representatives of more than 130 countries had agreed that the poor were willing and able to help themselves if they were given access to basic economic opportunities, including productive resources and capital in its Declaration and Plan of Action, the Summit had established the objective of reaching 100 million of the world's poorest families by the year 2005. Microcredit borrowers were more active in society, that their families enjoyed better health and their children were better educated. By promoting personal entrepreneurship and stimulating creativity and self-reliance, microcredit was an effective tool for social change. The role of microcredit in poverty eradication should be recognized in a General Assembly resolution. His delegation welcomed the recommendation concerning microcredit arrangements in the report of the Secretary-General (para. 30).

56. The 20/20 initiative, whereby 20 per cent of foreign aid allocated to human services was matched by a corresponding budget allocation in the recipient country, was another effective tool. In Bangladesh, spending in the social sector far exceeded that target. In many countries, social spending could be increased through an adjustment of priorities and a reallocation of domestic resources, for example from armaments to anti-poverty programmes. At the same time, most developing countries, particularly the least developed and sub-Saharan African countries, would continue to need ODA. According to the *Human Development Report 1997*, about $40 billion a year would be necessary.

57. **Ms. Celik** (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)) said that the Centre welcomed the proclamation of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. Poverty eradication had been a concern of the Centre since its establishment in 1978. Its major global initiatives in that connection had included the proclamation of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987, the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, launched in 1988, and the convening of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in 1996. Over the years, the Centre had responded vigorously to appeals by the General Assembly to support the poverty eradication efforts of Member States. An estimated 1.5 billion poverty-stricken people, representing one fourth of humankind, had inadequate shelter or were homeless. The urbanization of poverty, characterized by slums and squatter settlements, declining urban services, massive unemployment and underemployment, crime and social unrest, would be a growing phenomenon in the developing countries over the next decade.

58. The Centre's main poverty eradication strategy consisted of implementing the Habitat Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements. The Conference, whose themes had been "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world", had stressed the importance of poverty eradication and better living conditions and shelter for the poor. The anti-poverty component of the Habitat Agenda included the creation or enhancement of employment and income, mainly in the formal and informal construction and urban services sector; access by the poor to urban services; and the promotion of social integration policies which, *inter alia*, specifically targeted female-headed households, scavengers, homeless people, street children and other vulnerable groups and included measures for the prevention of urban violence.

59. In November, the Centre, in cooperation with the Government of Italy, would convene an international conference in Florence on practical approaches to urban poverty reduction. The conference was expected to launch the International Forum on Urban Poverty, which should facilitate the exchange of experience, the improvement of policy advice, technical support on poverty eradication in cities around the world and global public awareness-building.

60. **Mr. Nakouzi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that poverty and food insecurity would be the major challenge facing developing countries in the twenty-first century. In response to that challenge, FAO had initiated vigorous policy advisory and technical assistance programmes in support of Member States' efforts to raise agricultural and food production and to stimulate rural employment, particularly in low-income food-deficit countries.

61. Participants in the World Food Summit had affirmed that poverty was a major cause of food insecurity and that poverty eradication was critical to improving access to food. The Plan of Action adopted by the Summit stressed policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food. Its objectives included, *inter alia*, promoting employment in order to maximize the incomes of the poor with a view to poverty eradication and the achievement of food security; assistance to food insecure households in meeting their nutritional requirements; and the promotion of access by the poor and other vulnerable groups to basic education and primary health care as a means of strengthening self-reliance. In addition, a number of FAO programs, particularly its Network on Negotiated Land Reform, provided support to national efforts to improve access by the poor to land and rural resources.

62. FAO had cooperated with other United Nations agencies in supporting national action plans for poverty reduction in Yemen and Honduras. It had also organized a regional round-table meeting on integration of the rural disabled into the agricultural and agro-industrial sectors in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

63. As part of its capacity-building programme, FAO had produced training manuals for policy makers and policy analysts in developing countries on the implications of economic reform policies for food security and poverty alleviation. It provided training to government officials at the sub-national level on participatory planning in small-scale rural development projects. It had mainstreamed a gender perspective into its mandate and technical areas of expertise and was offering policy advice to countries on integrating a gender perspective in policy-making and planning and in legislative and administrative practices. In that connection, FAO activities included the collection, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated data and information on human resources in agriculture and rural development.

(e) Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (*continued*) (A/C.2/52/L.18)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/C.2/52/L.18)

64. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution, and stressed, in particular, its paragraphs 5, 7, 8 and 10. He hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

(g) Women in development (*continued*) (A/C.2/52/L.17)

Draft resolution on women in development (A/C.2/52/L.17)

65. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution and stressed, in particular, its second, fourth, sixth and twelfth preambular paragraphs and its paragraphs 2, 5, 7 and 13. He hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

(f) Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/C.2/52/L.19)

Draft resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/C.2/52/L.19)

66. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution. He drew attention, in particular, to its first and second preambular paragraphs and to its paragraphs 3, 6, 9 and 13. He hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.